

## **Senate Resolution No. 18**

**Introduced by Senator Ortiz**

Relative to Suicide Prevention Week

WHEREAS, In the year 2000, over 3,000 Californians, or an average of 8.5 people each day, died by suicide; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 75,000 Californians attempt suicide each year; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in California, exceeding deaths by homicide by 144 percent, and exceeding deaths by HIV/AIDS by 202 percent; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is the third leading cause of death in California among youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years; and

WHEREAS, The rate of suicide for older adults is also disproportionately high, with Californians age 65 years and older having a rate more than twice as high as that of younger Californians; and

WHEREAS, One-half of all firearm deaths in California are suicides; and

WHEREAS, In at least two counties in California, suicide is now the leading cause of unnatural deaths, exceeding deaths by vehicle accidents, drowning, and other unnatural causes; and

WHEREAS, At the very minimum, an average of six persons per suicide victim, or over 18,000 persons each year in California, suffer devastating and long lasting emotional trauma when a family member or friend dies as a result of suicide; and

WHEREAS, The causes of suicide are complex and multifaceted, involving psychological, biological, and, sociological factors; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is often the result of untreated mental illness, especially depressive illnesses, and research indicates that many suicides would have been preventable with immediate and appropriate intervention and treatment; and

WHEREAS, Suicide prevention opportunities continue to increase due to advances in clinical research pertaining to the diagnosis and effective treatment of mental illness, along with advances in neuroscience and in the development of community-based suicide prevention initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Additional research is needed to determine effective intervention strategies, especially for different age, gender, ethnic, and cultural groups; and

WHEREAS, Much more can be done to reduce the stigma associated with seeking help for emotional or mental health problems, as well as for seeking help for suicidal thoughts and behavior; and

WHEREAS, Research demonstrates that increased public awareness of warning signs of suicide, and awareness of appropriate and effective intervention strategies, would reduce suicide deaths; and

WHEREAS, Suicide attempts and completions impose, in addition to personal and economic loss to families and friends, a large unrecognized social and economic loss on the State of California and on local communities, through medical, law enforcement, and emergency personnel costs, as well as through lost economic and social contributions; and

WHEREAS, In the year 2000, in California, 33,000 suicide attempters were treated in emergency rooms or admitted to hospitals for treatment, and the hospital charges alone for suicide attempters admitted as inpatients exceeded \$275,000,000; and

WHEREAS, Only 41 percent of these suicide attempters admitted to hospitals as inpatients had private insurance, and the remaining costs not covered by insurance were absorbed by government and the hospitals; and

WHEREAS, The United States Surgeon General has issued to the states “The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent Suicide” (1999) and the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (2002) to encourage states to develop and implement suicide prevention strategies based on these documents and the public health model; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California*, That the Members of the Senate declare all of the following:

(1) Suicide is a major public health problem that can be reduced with effective actions.

(2) Suicide prevention is a state priority, and counties and local communities are encouraged also to declare suicide prevention a priority.

(3) Initiatives dedicated to the prevention of suicide, to the promotion of effective treatment for persons at risk, and to the support of persons who have lost a loved one to suicide, are encouraged.

(4) Development of accessible and affordable mental health treatment to enable persons at risk of suicide to obtain these services, without fear of any stigma, is encouraged.

(5) Citizens are encouraged to join in recognizing “Suicide Prevention Week” and in promoting suicide prevention activities.



(6) State and local public and private organizations are encouraged to work in mutual cooperation to develop and implement a California Strategy for Suicide Prevention using the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention as a guideline; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Members hereby proclaim May 4 through May 10, 2003, and every first full week in May hereafter, as “Suicide Prevention Week”; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

Senate Resolution No. 18 read and adopted by the Senate April 28, 2003.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

